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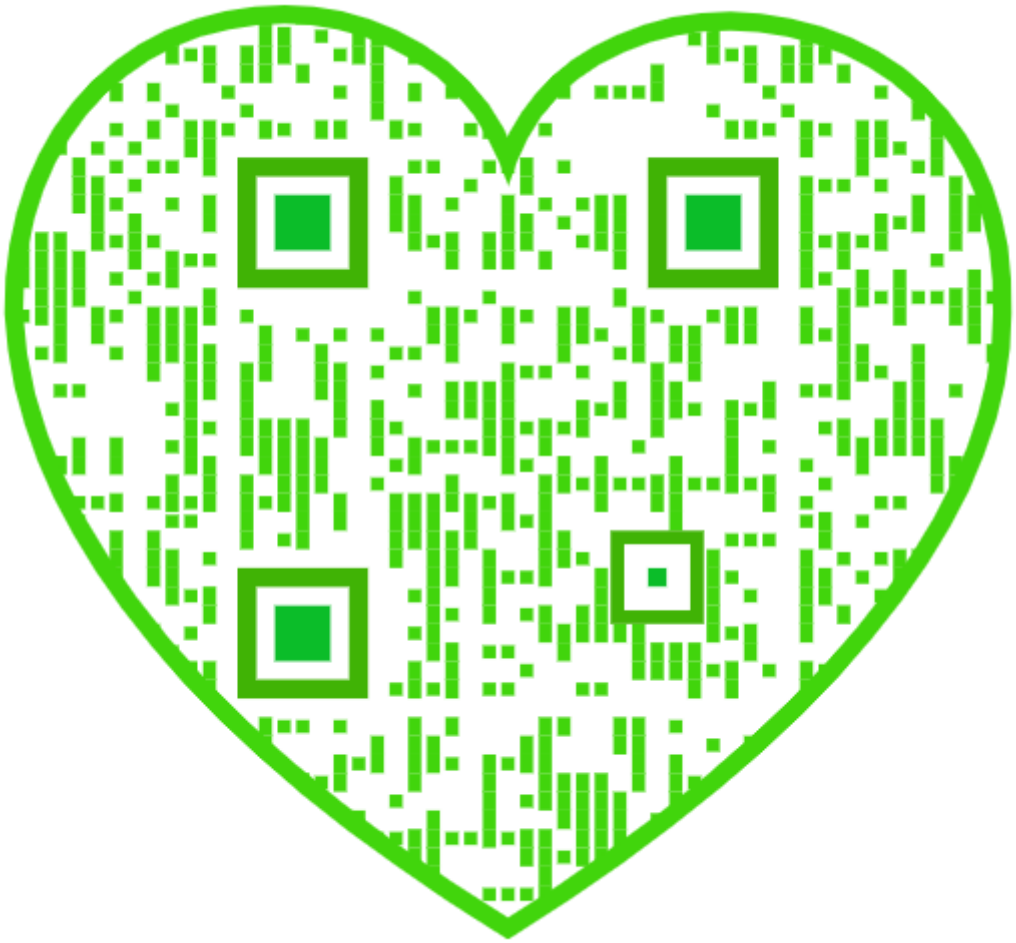

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SHUTTLE-CRAFT COURSES IN WEAVING

MARY M. ATWATER

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Shuttle-Craft Courses in Weaving

MARY M. ATWATER
BASIN, MONTANA

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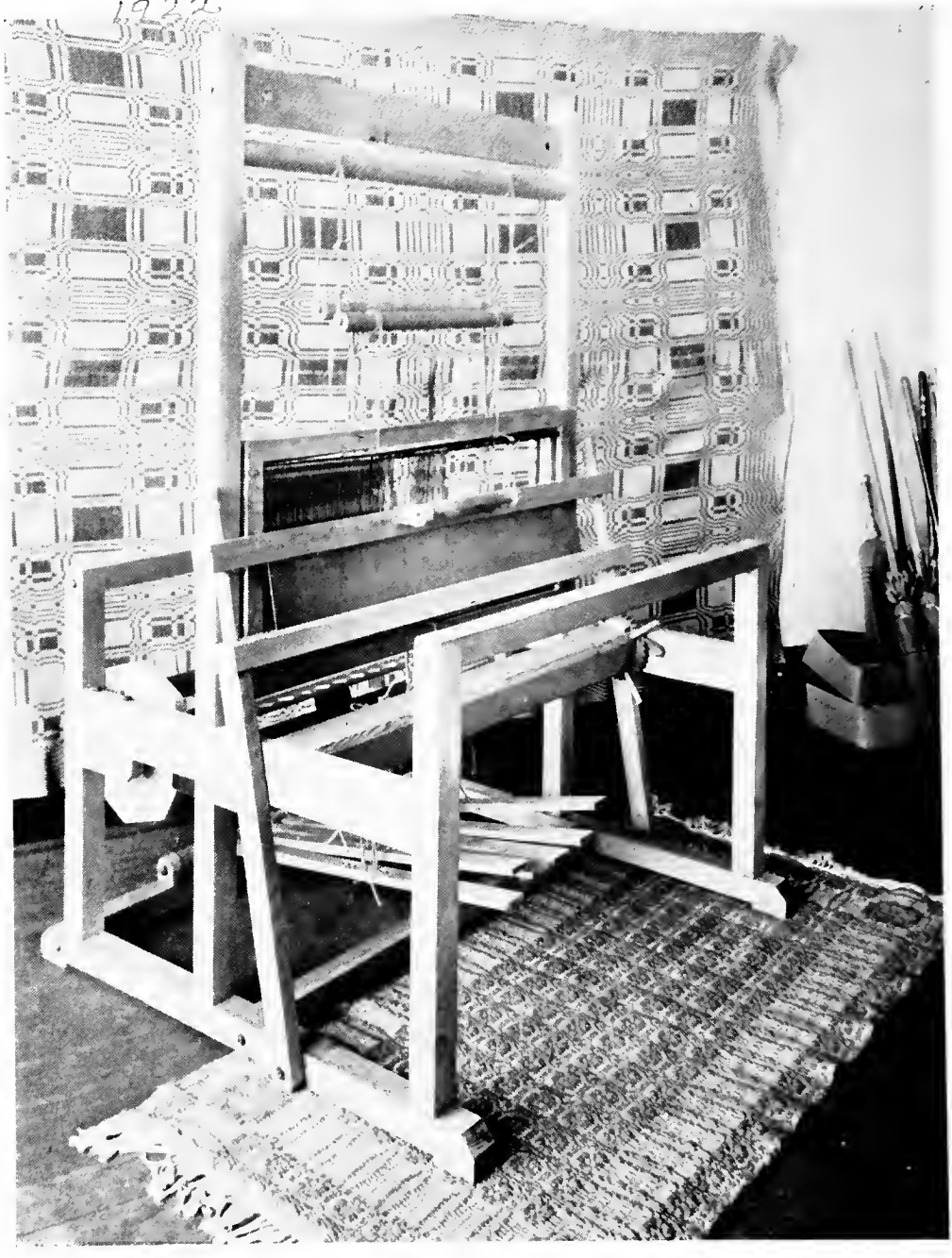


A Shuttle-Craft "Special" Loom in the Workshop of the Seattle Light-House for the Blind

Hand Weaving for Pleasure and Profit

COLONIAL WEAVING

Weaving is an art as old as man himself. The very first man of all must have had an instinct in his fingers that led him to interlace twigs and grasses for shelter and covering. Without this instinct he might never have been a man at all. So it is not surprising that almost everyone likes to weave!

I believe that the only reason so few—comparatively—know the pleasure of weaving is the difficulty in getting information, instruction, equipment and supplies. Following the introduction of machinery, hand-weaving became among us almost a lost art. Now, however, it is being revived, and I confidently look forward to a day when a hand-loom will be as customary a piece of household furniture as it was in the days of our great-great-grandparents.

Many of the textiles of that day have come down to us. We recognize in them a charm and beauty impossible in a machine-made product. But we need not sigh over the "good old days,"—there is nothing to keep us from producing today, in exactly the same manner, things just as beautiful.

Weaving for pleasure appeals more to women than to men, for the simple reason that more women than men have leisure for handicraft. It is, however, by no means an effeminate occupation. The professional weavers of the Colonial period were, as far as I know, all men. They traveled about from village to village and from farm to farm, making into cloth the yarns spun and dyed by the women. It seems also to have been customary for men to do a large part of the domestic weaving during the winter months. Many men are interested in the present revival of hand-weaving—a great part of the constructive impulse back of the movement comes from them.

Hand-weaving as a business appeals to certain groups of men as well as to women—those, for instance, who after half a

life-time spent in uncongenial work find themselves at liberty to turn to something else. Then, too, there are many partially disabled veterans of the great war who need an occupation that may be carried on at home under the conditions of their disabilities—men so crippled that heavy work is impossible, or so subject to recurring illness that regular work or long hours are out of the question. For such, and even for those who are partially or totally blind, much hand-weaving is possible.

Then there are husbands. Many husbands are apt to consider feminine handicraft trifling and somewhat irritating; they take a very different attitude toward weaving. A loom is interesting. Real things can be made on it—big, useful, sensible things. The suggestion of home-woven tweed for a golf suit interests the usual husband even to the point of enthusiasm.

The Colonial weaves, though often plainly of Scandinavian origin, have a character all their own. They constitute a real American national art. To us Americans this gives them a sentimental as well as an intrinsic value. I have therefore laid particular stress in my course on the Colonial weaves. This is the more necessary as the majority of instructors in weaving being Scandinavian women, the Swedish types of weaving rather than our own Colonial weaves are at present being taught.

THE PLEASURE IN WEAVING

Weaving as a pastime has much to recommend it. What can be more delightful than to sit at the loom and watch a beautiful piece of material—of one's own design and personal manufacture—pile up in front of the reed! The boat-shaped shuttles of smooth wood, very pleasant to the hand, make a charming whirring noise as they are thrown through the shed. There is satisfaction, too, in the dull thump of the batten. And figure by figure the pattern grows till behold! a new masterpiece, worthy to be set beside the treasured old weavings of an earlier day.

POSSIBILITIES OF A LOOM

There are many things one can make on a loom much better—and faster—than in any other way. A woven decoration, too is a part of the fabric itself—far more interesting and satisfactory than a pattern in embroidery, applique, or batik applied to a machine-made fabric.

One may weave "linsey-woolsey" material for a sport skirt in a day—a scarf in an afternoon—a coverlet in a week. All these things with others too numerous to mention—smocks, children's dresses, tweeds, bags, bits of trimming for hats and dresses, as well as rugs, curtains, portieres, pillow-tops, table runners, couch covers, towels and table-linen, in the greatest variety of materials and patterns—all are within the scope of that fortunate being who possesses a good hand-loom and who knows how to use it.

WEAVING FOR PROFIT

Weaving is for many reasons an ideal home-industry. It is one of the very few things that can really be done at home better than anywhere else, and that can be done irregularly and in spare time. A paying business may be built up with a very small outlay of capital.

In any community, no matter how small, there is an income in the weaving of rag rugs. This is not very interesting work, but it leads to better things.

The market for the finest pieces of hand-weaving is, naturally, in the cities. I am preparing a list of agencies through which hand-woven articles may be sold, so that those who live in isolated places may have the advantage of the broader market.

In weaving for profit it is usually advisable to select some one product—or type of product—and keep quite strictly to that, building up a sales channel with due care. I know a woman who makes money weaving light-weight all-wool dress materials with a bit of pattern ornament. These materials she has made up into simple one-piece dresses that are artistic and charming and sell for a good price. A craft-shop and studio where people may come and dabble a bit in weaving, and where articles are also shown for sale, is a paying venture in many communities. Another very interesting line of work is the weaving to order of entire sets of draperies for Colonial rooms. Such orders may be obtained through interior decorators. The line to choose depends on the taste and ability of the individual weaver, and also on the character of the available markets.

The Teaching of Weaving

To teachers in the manual training field a working knowledge of weaving is essential. Weaving is being used more and more in schools, hospitals, and correctional institutions.

It has till now been so difficult to obtain instructions, except in the very simplest forms of hand-weaving, that many teachers who are using it in their work are handicapped by insufficient preparation. They are unable to get the most out of their looms or their pupils.

My set of instructions with the accompanying blue-printed diagrams are designed to serve as a practical shop-manual for crafts-workers, teachers and occupational therapists—giving a greater range of possibilities in class-work and curative workshop practice.

It is perhaps not out of place to say a word as to my own qualifications as a teacher of weaving: I had a very complete art-education—in Chicago and Paris—and later worked for several years as a decorative designer.

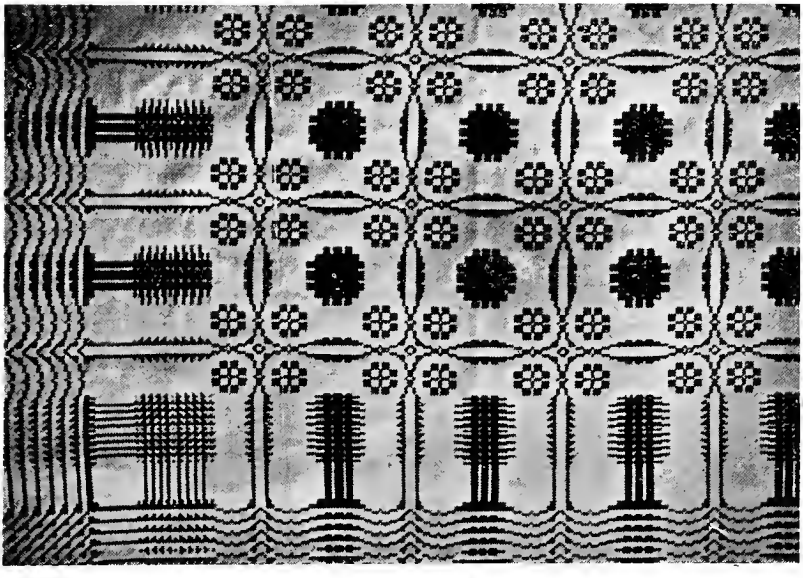
Weaving I took up for pleasure, and also for social service, while living in a small isolated mining camp in the mountains. I organized and financed a "village industry" that flourished and produced good work. During this time I studied from all available sources and did a good deal of research work in libraries and museums all over the country. I collected a great deal of interesting material which it is a pleasure to me to be able to pass on to others, as I am doing through my courses.

There are, for instance, a number of ancient weaves, that, though no more difficult to produce than the ordinary "overshot" weaving, appear to be very little known. The so-called "Summer and Winter" or "double-face" weave is to my mind the most satisfactory for coverlets of all the old Colonial weaves. The coverlet shown in the illustration as a background for the loom is in this weave. The pattern of this particular coverlet is a "Blooming Leaf" pattern, adapted from an old piece of weaving in the Pennsylvania Museum. Notice it again on the lower right hand side of the illustration showing the samples of weaving. The

coverlet under the pillow, bottom center, of this last illustration is in this same weave, but a different pattern.

I was in the midst of my study of weaving when the war broke out, and later when the Government advertised the need of women skilled in handicraft for hospital occupational therapy, I enlisted. I served a number of months at Camp Lewis Base Hospital, and later when that hospital closed, was transferred to Letterman General Hospital at the San Francisco Presidio, where I served for nearly a year.

After leaving army service I went into state hospital work in Illinois. Later I came west again, and for the last two years have been instructing, and practicing occupational therapy in this part of the country.



Coverlet in "Summer and Winter" Weave—a Simple "Snow-Ball" Pattern With "Pine Tree" Border

The Shuttle-Craft Courses

The correspondence courses in weaving that I am offering are the outcome of numbers of inquiries I received for information about weaving. So many people want to weave, and it is so hard to find how to go about it! Some of the people qualified to give information appear to be very chary of helping others—perhaps in the mistaken idea that to make a mystery of weaving adds to its value. I believe, on the contrary, that the more people know about hand-weaving the better it will be appreciated.

I was uncertain at first whether or not weaving could be successfully taught by means of written instructions and diagrams. Through the kindness of the Home Economics Department of the University of Washington, I was able to test my course before offering it to the public. A group of students who knew nothing of weaving were given a loom and my notes for the first lessons. Without other instruction they produced creditable work, and one of their number even "demonstrated" weaving for a week in one of the down town department stores.

My students now number many, in all parts of the country, and the excellence of the work sent in to me for criticism makes it possible for me to say with assurance that weaving by mail is a success.

The course in weaving on a loom is designed to cover a period of six months. The work could be accomplished in less time, and additional time may be arranged for when necessary.

The Course is divided into three sections, as follows:

SECTION I.
FOUR HARNESS "OVERSHOT" PATTERN WEAVING.

Lesson I.—Description of the loom; names and uses of various parts; notes on materials; the knots; how to hang the harnesses; warping; the "tie-up."

(2 blue-print diagrams.)

Lesson 2—How to thread a loom for pattern weaving—known as "drawing in" the pattern—"sleying," "tieing in" and weaving. Three pattern-drafts, illustrated, are furnished

with this lesson. The patterns are: "Honeysuckle," "Monk's Belt," and "Diamonds." These three patterns may be woven in a great many ways, a number of which are noted in the instructions. The student is expected to send in for criticism three pieces of weaving: (1) a pillow-top; (2) a table-runner or a towel in plain weave with borders, and (3) a "sampler" showing as many variations of the pattern as possible.

(3 blue-prints.)

Lesson 3.—Rug weaving. Materials for rug-work; how rags should be prepared for rug weaving; possibilities of the plain or "tabby" weave—borders, arrowheads, set in figures, etc. —overshot weaving adapted to rug-work. The "Wreath Rose" pattern is furnished with this lesson. The student should send in for criticism two rugs—one in plain weave with borders and the other in pattern weave. Clear photographs, with a sample of weaving, will be accepted for credit.

(2 blue-prints.)

SECTION II.—DRAFT WRITING

Lesson 4.—Weaving on cross-section paper—how to develop a pattern from a threading draft; various ways of writing drafts; how to transpose and correct faulty drafts; how to increase or diminish patterns, and how to arrange borders; patterns on "opposites" for 4, 6, or 8 harnesses; to write drafts from samples, or from photographs.

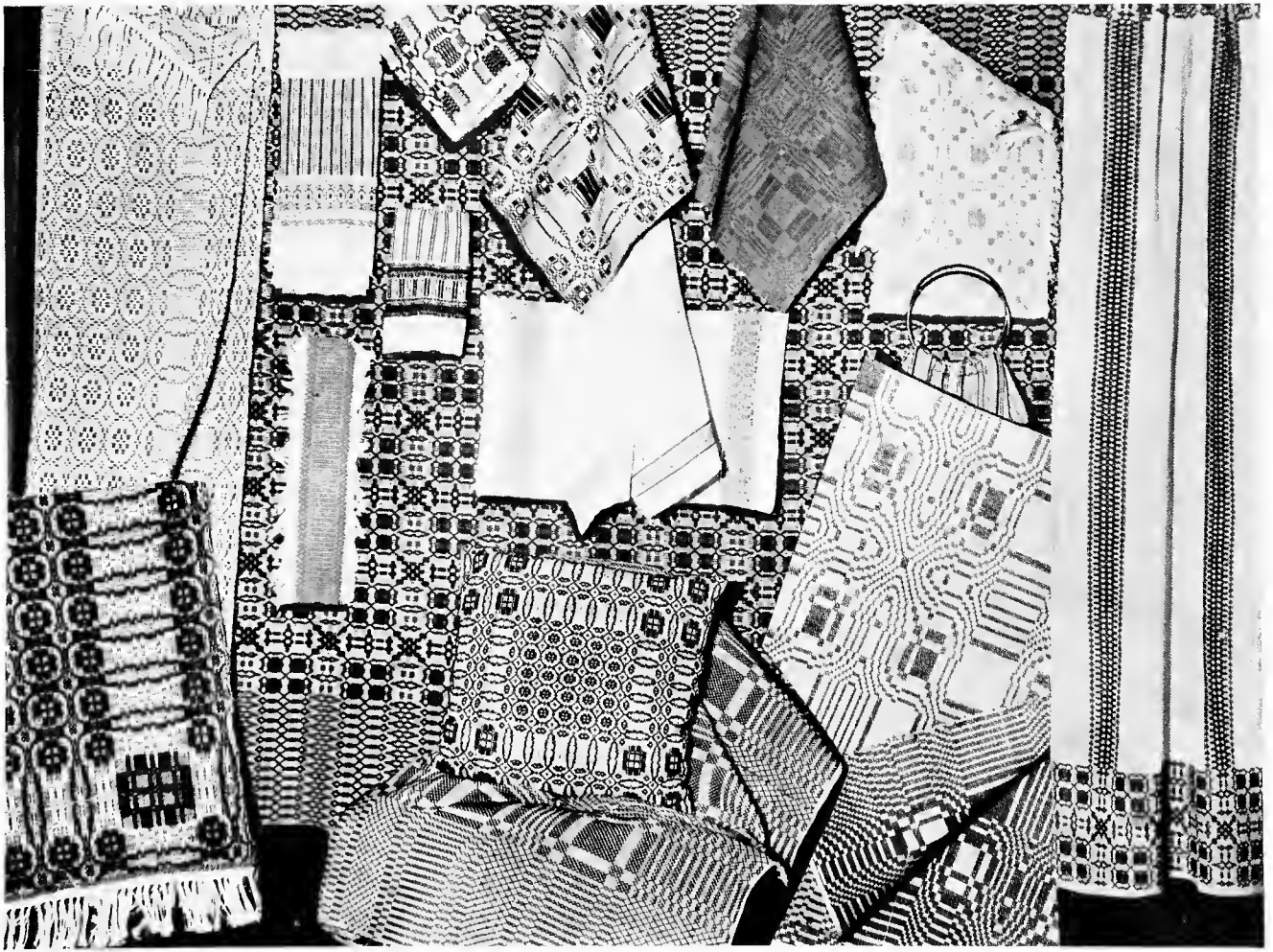
The student is expected to send in for criticism a number of drawings.

This work requires no previous training in drawing. It is the most important part of the study of weaving to those who intend to teach, and to those who aspire to do original work in weaving.

(9 blue-prints, including a large number of drafts accompany this lesson.)

SECTION III.—VARIOUS WEAVES.

Lesson 5.—Special weaves for many purposes; some old blanket weaves; the three-harness weave; weaves for linen; for curtains and hangings; some Scandinavian weaves; notes on tufted weaving; embroidery weaving, etc.



Samples of Rugs, Coverlets, Etc., in "Overshot" and "Summer and Winter" Weaves

Various small articles are assigned as problems to be sent in for criticism.

(4 blue-prints, many patterns.)

Lesson 6.—Gives a description of the little known "Summer and Winter" weave, on 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 harnesses. The blue-prints include the famous "Pine Tree Border" and a large number of unusual patterns. The problem assigned for this lesson is the weaving of a coverlet. Directions are given for arranging a coverlet in the loom—whether for weaving in two or in three strips—suggestions as to where to center the pattern, arrangement and width of borders, etc.

(5 blue-prints.)

Lesson 7.—Patterns set in the warp as well as woven in the weft; double weaving; the twill, and the broken twill or 4-heddle damask weave; a curious weave described in the old book on weaving by "Bronson." (This weave is useful in many ways —especially for weaving little detached figures.)

Several small articles are assigned as exercises for this lesson.

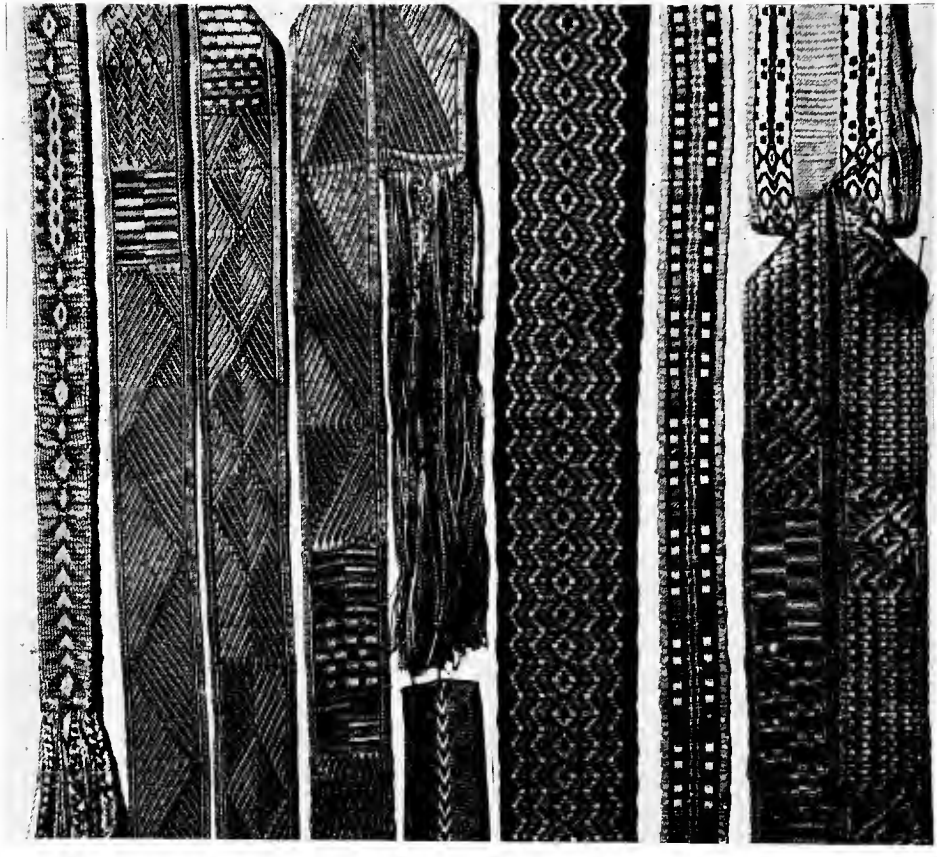
(5 blue-prints.)

Lesson 8.—Is a thesis problem, the designing of a bed-room set of Colonial textiles—coverlet, curtains, rugs, scarves, towels, portieres, pillow-tops, either in an original pattern or in an adaptation of an old one.

The work assigned to be sent in for criticism includes diagrams, drafts and samples of weaving.

A diploma is issued on satisfactory completion of the course.

Course in Card Weaving



Egyptian Type Card-Woven Girdles

Card-weaving, which I offer in a separate course, is an interesting little handicraft, quite unlike any other form of weaving. No loom is required. The equipment consists of a handful of square cards with holes in the corners. When properly strung up these cards form an ingenious little loom on which narrow textiles, such as girdles, hat-bands, neck-ties, etc., may be woven in a highly remarkable and delightful manner. The fabric produced has a peculiar structure that makes it very firm, strong and pliable, and of a grateful texture. A wide variety of pattern and color effects are possible with this technique.

Card-weaving is not a new thing, though so novel. It is, in

fact, one of the oldest of textile processes, having been used in ancient Egypt for the weaving of the highly ornamented girdles and bands found pictured in the wall-paintings of tombs. I stumbled on it quite by chance in a rare and beautiful book—in French—describing ancient textiles of this order. I experimented and found this form of weaving fascinating.

In fact, to some people it is almost too fascinating! I once sent an unfinished bit of card-weaving and some directions to a friend of mine. It was some time before I heard from her. She wrote: "I don't know whether to bless or execrate you! Ever since the package came my house has been all tied up with strings, and no one has had much to eat—but I have had a wonderful time!"

It happened, too, that I once set up a bit of card weaving to entertain a sick child—with very good results. It was really this experience that led me to enlist for hospital service. It seemed to me that what had amused a little sick boy might be interesting to a big sick one. This proved to be true. During my practice of occupational therapy I have used card-weaving more than any other one craft.

I make a practice of writing a new pattern for each patient, so that I have collected a great amount of material. The fruits of this experience I am offering in my course, which is—to the best of my knowledge—the only thing published in English on the subject of card-weaving.

The course as I send it out consists of a set of detailed directions, 12 blue-prints showing 75 of the best patterns from my army note-books, together with a set of 100 weaving cards and a piece of work set up and partly woven.

Process of Card-Weaving

Shuttle-Craft Blue-Printed Illustrated Pattern Drafts

The Shuttle-Craft Drafts for Hand Weaving

The Shuttle-Craft blue-printed pattern drafts, a list of which follows, have been issued from time to time during the last six years. They are intended for the use of those who know something of weaving. The drafts are uniform in make-up, consisting of a threading draft written in the graphic manner, directions for treadeling, and a diagram of the resulting pattern. It has been my aim to include in this series as many as possible of the historic patterns, and in order to give the purest form of each pattern I have studied many examples of old weaving.

Two groups of drafts are of patterns from an ancient book of designs by a weaver of the Revolutionary period, preserved in the Pennsylvania Museum. Many of these patterns are unusual and particularly pleasing.

SERIES A.—COLONIAL COVERLETS—GROUP I.

No. 1. "Whig Rose"—with border.
No. 2. "Double Chariot Wheels" or "Church Windows."
No. 3. "The Cross of Tennessee."
No. 4. "Boston"—a four harness pattern woven on "opposites."
No. 5. "Missouri Trouble," also "Tennessee Trouble."
No. 6. "Mary Simmons."
No. 7. "Double Bow Knot" or "Double Muscadine Hulls,"—also simple form of "Blazing Star"—with border.
No. 8. "Pine Bloom."
No. 9. "Dog Tracks"—with border.
No. 10. "Snail Trail," Winding Vine or "Cat Track."

SERIES A.—GROUP II.

No. 11. "Single Chariot Wheels"—elaborate version, 2 drafts.
No. 12. "Governor's Garden" or "Rocky Mountain Cucumber." "St. Ann's Robe," "Leopard Skin," etc., etc.
No. 13. "Double Snow Flake."
No. 14. "Blazing Star," also a form of "Sunrise."
No. 15. "Forty-nine Snow-Balls," also "Nine Snow-Balls," or "Scarlet Balls."
No. 16. "Rose of Sharon," a "Governor's Garden" variation.
No. 17. "Irish Chain" also "World's Wonder."
No. 18. "Work Complete" or "Catalpa Flower," "Young Man's Fancy," etc.
No. 19. "Sun, Moon and Stars"—with border.
No. 20. "Wheel of Fortune."

SERIES B.—GROUP I.

Ten patterns from the "John Landes" book of Drawings, in the Philadelphia Museum, arranged for 4-harness overshot weaving. These are unusual and beautiful.

SERIES B.—GROUP II.

Ten patterns from the "John Landes" book, arranged for 6-harness overshot weaving on "opposites."

SERIES C.—MISCELLANEOUS.

GROUPS I., II. and III. (Not yet issued.)

GROUP IV. "304-4 Special." A group of simple patterns, intended for use on the "Wonder-Weaver"—304-4 Loom.

No. 41. "Honeysuckle" or "Rose-Path," a simplified "Pine Bloom."
No. 42. "Monk's Belt."
No. 43. "Oak Leaves," a detail from the "Johan Landes Book."
No. 44. "Wheat," a fine weave without tabby.
No. 45. "German Star."
No. 46. "Maltese Cross."
No. 47. A Two-Block "Summer and Winter" Pattern.
No. 48. "Diamonds," or "Russian Diaper."
No. 49. "Laurel Blossom."
No. 50. "Stars and Squares."

SERIES D.—COLONIAL COVERLETS IN DOUBLE-FACE AND DOUBLE WEAVE.

GROUP I. Ten "Summer and Winter" drafts.

No. 1. "Whig Rose"—simple 6-harness; also 10-harness draft.
No. 2. "Whig Rose," Elaborate—7 harness.
No. 3. "Whig Rose," Variation, or "Lisbon Star"—7-harness.
No. 4. "Snow-Ball," Simple—6-harness.
No. 5. "Snow-Ball," Elaborate—7-harness.
No. 6. "Pine Tree" Border to be used with any of the foregoing except No. 1.
No. 7. "Lover's Knot"—6-harness.
No. 8. A Two-Block Pattern—4-harness.
No. 9. "Blooming Leaf"—5-harness.
No. 10. "Wheel of Fortune"—6-harness.

SERIES B. GROUP II.—(To be issued soon.) The same patterns as Group 1, drafted for Double Weaving.

(Nos. 17 and 18, written for Double Weaving after the Scandinavian system, are ready.)

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